



# STATE OF IDAHO



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Purchasing Potatoes for Planting Certified Seed Guarantees Good Yield and a Healthy Crop**

Boise - Enacted by the Idaho State Legislature in 1996, the Idaho Seed Potato Law requires that all potatoes for planting purposes offered for sale or distribution into or within Idaho be inspected and certified. Certification agencies such as the Idaho Crop Improvement Association provide inspection and certification services for a variety of seed types, including potatoes. Certifications help to ensure variety purity and health of the seed.

Potato plants can be plagued with many diseases – bacterial, viral and fungal – and some of these are passed on through potato tubers. Potatoes seen in the supermarket should not be used for seed. They may contain levels of disease that will ultimately affect yield and quality. They also may have been treated to prevent sprouting, which will cause the plant to not produce a viable potato yield.

Certified seed potatoes are tested for major potato diseases, and have been selected to provide the best results with the highest yield potential. Producers of seed potatoes rigorously clean and protect their premises and do a rigorous selection to increase seed over a few generations from isolated nuclear stocks. The first leaf meristem is used in tissue culture because it has a far lower risk of containing virus particles.

An exception to the law allows for potato growers to plant back potato "eliminators" grown by them on their farm, provided they are no more than one generation removed from Certified Seed planted by them and that it has been tested by the Idaho State Department of Agriculture and found substantially free from disease. Growers seeking this exemption need to get their samples in early as the test takes up to two weeks once the sampled potatoes have sprouted.

Penalties for a violation of this law can run as high as \$10 per hundredweight of potatoes in violation of the law.

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